

Message Text

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TAGS: PEPR, SOPN, PBOR, ET, SO, US

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DEPUTY SECSTATE CHRISTOPHER STATE-
MENT ON HORN CONFLICT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 0290

1.AF/E MADE FOLLOWING INFORMAL TRANSCRIPT FROM VOA TAPES
OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER'S COMMENTS TO CONFERENCE OF
BROADCASTERS AND EDITORS JANUARY 18:

Q. IT SEEMS RECENTLY US AND CUBA ARE GETTING CLOSER
TOGETHER. ONE MIGHT REMEMBER THIS MORNING ARTICLE ABOUT
RECEPTION AT FORMER CUBAN EMBASSY AND I AM WONDERING HOW
CLOSE ARE WE AT PRESENT TIME TO RESTORING DIPLOMATIC RE-
LATIONS TO POINT OF HAVING EMBASSIES IN BOTH CAPITALS AND
ANY OTHER THING WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT.

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A. WELL,NO DOUBT IN YEAR 1977 WE CAME A RATHER LONG WAY
IN OUR RELATIONS WITH CUBA. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEREST
SECTIONS BOTH HERE AND IN HAVANA HAVE ENABLED US TO
COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER IN A WAY THAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE
BEFORE, TO DEAL WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS SHIP SEIZURES AND
OTHER MINOR IRRITANTS IN A MINOR WAY. HOWEVER, I WOULD

HAVE TO SAY THAT THE PRESENCE OF MAJOR CUBAN MILITARY

FORCES IN AFRICA, AND NOW PARTICULARLY IN ETHIOPIA, STANDS AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO FUTURE NORMALIZATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

WE DIDN'T MAKE PRECONDITIONS WHEN WE ENTERED INTO TALKS BUT MADE IT CLEAR PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS IN AFRICA IS GOING TO BE A PROBLEM FOR US. TO SEE THEM MOVING WITH LARGE NUMBERS INTO ETHIOPIA, I THINK THIS PROBLEM GROWS RATHER THAN DIMINISHES SO I WOULD NOT SEE ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH CUBA UNTIL WE SEE SOME CHANGE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA AND PARTICULARLY UNTIL WE SEE SOMEDIMINUTION OF THEIR TROOP STRENGTH IN AFRICA. IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE IT HAS BEEN GOING IN DIRECTION THAT IS UNHEALTHY RATHER THAN BENEFICIAL FROM THE STANDPOINT OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

Q. WHAT IS POLICY BASIS FOR THIS STAND TOWARD CUBA. THE U.S. HAS TROOPS ALL OVER THE WORLD. WHY CAN'T CUBA?

A. WE THINK THAT PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN AFRICA IS DECIDEDLY AN UNHEALTHY FACTOR. WE THINK PROBLEMS OF AFRICA SHOULD BE SOLVED BY NATIONS THAT ARE THERE. WE THINK LARGE NUMBERS OF SOVIET OR CUBAN TROOPS TEND TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DESTABILIZE REGIMES THERE AND INTRODUCE FOREIGN INFLUENCE WHICH IS DECIDEDLY UNHEALTHY FOR COUNTRIES THERE. THE POLICY BASIS OF OUR JUDGMENT ABOUT THAT REALLY REFLECTS THE NOTION THAT AFRICA IS A CONTINENT ON VERGE OF ENORMOUS GROWTH, OF ENORMOUS PROSPECTS AND THAT SITUATION IS NOT HELPED BY FOREIGN TROOPS NOR BY WEIGHING DOWN OF ECONOMY BY NEED TO PURCHASE LARGE AMOUNTS OF ARMS.

Q. DOES SOVIET INVOLVEMENT AND ETHIOPIAN PRESSURE ON SOMALIA HOLD THE POTENTIAL FOR SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE TO OUR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA?

A. WELL, WE WOULD HOPE NOT, WE WOULD HOPE THE SOVIET UNION WOULD JOIN WITH US IN TRYING TO PRODUCE A CEASE FIRE THERE AND THEN SOME SORT OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WE CERTAINLY HAVE CRITICIZED AND REGARD WITH CONCERN SOVIET AIR FLIGHTS, AIR SUPPLY INTO ETHIOPIA BUT WOULD HOPE TO ENGAGE THEM IN JOINT PROCESS OF FINDING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THAT TROUBLED AREA. FINDING A WAY TO GET A CEASE FIRE AND THEN A SETTLEMENT IS NOT EASY. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE ETHIOPIANS, THEY VIEW

SOMALIA AS BEING IN THEIR TERRITORY AND STEPPING ON
THEIR TOES. FROM STANDPOINT OF SOMALIANS, THEY REGARD

THAT AS TERRITORY IN WHICH THEY HAVE DEEP INTEREST. WE
ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO WORK AS HARD AS WE CAN, AND
WE WOULD LIKE TO ENGAGE SOVIETS IN PROCESS OF FINDING
A CEASEFIRE IN THAT AREA AND A SATISFACTORY BASIS FOR
A SETTLEMENT AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT IT WOULD NOT AFFECT
OUR OTHER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

2. WE ARE UNABLE TO ASCERTAIN FROM VOA WHAT PART OF
ABOVE WAS ACTUALLY BROADCAST AND WHAT ADDITIONAL
COMMENTARY MAY HAVE BEEN ADDED BY VOA ANNOUNCER.

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CHRISTOPHER

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